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STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, NEA/PI, INR/NESA, R/MR, I/GNEA,
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LONDON FOR NEA WATCHER
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TAGS: OPRC KMDR KPAQ XF KU MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION -- U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

SUMMARY

Tuesday, November 4, 2008

¶1. (U) Summary and Comment. On the day of the American presidential elections, many of the Arabic language Kuwaiti print dailies ran editorials that speculated as to who would win the election, as well as the possible consequences for Kuwait. While one liberal Kuwaiti daily, Al-Rai, predicted Democratic candidate Barack Obama to be the winner, it opined that an Obama victory would bring about "the fall of America." All other Kuwaiti print dailies predicted an Obama victory, and characterized as positive the consequences of such a victory. Interestingly, none of the Kuwaiti Arabic language dailies criticized nor mentioned Republican candidate John McCain in their editorial sections. End Summary and Comment.

¶2. (U) Block Quotes

-- Carrying the headline, "The fall of America is coming no matter what," daily editorialist in the liberal Arabic language daily Al-Rai, Dr. Sami Nasser Khalifa, wrote:

"The financial crisis that hit the U.S. is a sign of the beginning of the end. After today, the U.S. is not going to have a dominant voice outside of its frontiers. After today, the U.S. will not be able to go back to what it called the system of single polarity, which it has enjoyed since the collapse of the former Soviet Union. The U.S. can no longer exercise its previous powers to dominate and abuse the resources of other nations, and steal the will of their people. Today the U.S. will decide to vote for presidential candidate Barack Obama, who has called for inward-focused policies, as well as a focus on dealing with the crisis at home. This is no doubt a step that signals the beginning of the end."

-- Under the headline "The White House and the Tan President," former MP Dr. Hassan Abdullah Jawhar opined in the Arabic language daily Al-Jarida:

"In spite of his tan skin, Obama managed to defeat his fierce competitors in the Democratic Party. Being of African origin and a minority did not stop him from marketing his ideas and reaching the hearts of millions of white voters. Even more important, he has managed to translate slogans about bringing the nation together into action. He is promising to end the long reign of the right wing radicals over U.S. foreign policies and the decision-making process. He promises to put matters into the hands of all Americans. In doing so, he did not need vote buying, or giving favors to some people!"

-- In an editorial headlined "Obama's Victory," political science

professor and daily columnist Dr. Shamlan Al-Essa wrote in the conservative Arabic daily Al-Watan:

"U.S. foreign policy in the Gulf will remain unchanged. Perhaps we will see an increased American influence and presence if a security agreement is not reached between Baghdad and Washington. In the Obama administration, the U.S. will not abandon its Gulf allies."

-- Liberal Arabic daily Al-Qabas published an Op-Ed by Ms. Suad Al-Mi'jil, where she writes:

"Over several months, not only in the United States, but throughout the entire world people have been pre-occupied with the American elections. Even though many expect Obama to win the race to the White House, there are some who doubt this, taking into consideration the mentality of American society, which has yet to accept being led by an African-American. The polls, however, contest this fact. American society might once again confirm that the "American Beauty" of respecting minority rights and rejecting racism is still a beauty without substance, just like the rose petals in the film "American Beauty." Those of us in the Middle East have dealt with the "American Beauty" because of its project of spreading democracy, which was the reason for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. These wars were among many other problems caused by the "American Beauty," which left us without any solutions. America may elect a black or minority president but this does not mean that the "American Beauty" has any substance. This is attested by the fact that civil rights for African-Americans took around 100 years."

-- Under the headline "Barack Obama, the Hollywood Hero" Nizar Al-Kortas, a columnist in the pro-government Arabic language daily

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Al-Anbaa, wrote:

"Today, Barack Obama represents all of the minorities, as well as all of the categories that have suffered from oppression, poverty, and racism under the American regime. Barack Obama is the one to realize what has previously been characterized as impossible -- an African-American governing the United States. He does not have the same ingredients as his predecessors. He possesses a logical mind and unlimited ambition. We have to wait to see Obama as the top American leader. It might be a historical step that will change the world's view of the American Government from being arrogant to being acceptable."

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